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Notes for Remarks

by

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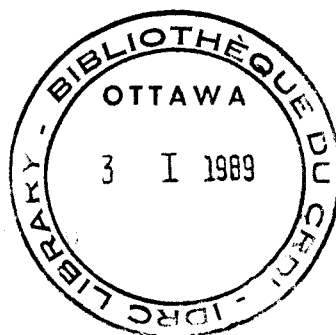
to the

CONVOCATION CEREMONY,

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Mr. Chancellor, Mr. Rector, Fellow members of this graduating class, guests.

D'être ici devant vous, pouvoir partager avec vous l'honneur d'entrer dans cette communauté fière de ses académiciens et de ses étudiants, d'avoir l'occasion d'adresser quelques mots à un auditoire aussi distingué - c'est pour moi un moment que je ne saurai jamais oublier. Je vous remercie très sincèrement, Monsieur le Chancelier.

Je voudrais également ajouter que ce diplôme me permet de joindre, comme membre de l'Université d'Ottawa, mes deux jeunes filles, Catherine et Cynthia, et ma belle-fille Maura. Je suis très content de les suivre.

And to top it all, Sir, is the very happy circumstance of sharing this honour today with a most distinguished Canadian, my good friend, Shirley Thomson. I extend to her my warmest congratulations and the thanks of all of us for her extraordinary accomplishments. She presides with distinction over one of this country's national treasures.

The more than generous language of the citation encourages me to express the hope that the members of this

graduating class will retain fond memories of this day for two reasons: one, for the recognition you have earned for years of hard work, and second, as the moment when events cease to appear to you as focussed, identifiable, discrete, and severable. Each of you enters now that confusing environment which is the world post-university. In this world, you will have the opportunity to assume - as all too many of your predecessors have - that life can be compartmentalized in disciplinary and geographic fashion; that events elsewhere can be disregarded because distance serves as an effective filter and barrier; that issues may be confronted as one examines a complicated dinner menu, selecting and discarding this or that element according to your momentary fancy.

You could make those assumptions. But you would be terribly wrong.

In this world, I plead with each of you to recognize that geographic distance is now meaningless in terms of weaponry, environment, infection, and economics; that the ingredients of substance, of ethics, of spirituality, of humanism are irrevocably interlinked; that humankind as a result of its own brilliant endeavours and its own stupid blunders is now irreversibly bound together in a quest which can lead as readily to the extinction of the species as it can to a golden age of

accomplishment. The outcome will depend very much on each one of you.

The attitudes and the actions of each one of you will determine which of those outcomes will be forthcoming, as will the attitudes and actions of young men and women in all countries, both industrialized and developing.

Parmi les leaders du développement, je voudrais rendre hommage à un organisme remarquable qui fête cette année son 20<sup>e</sup> anniversaire, l'Institut de développement international et de coopération de l'Université d'Ottawa. Cet institut était unique en son genre à l'époque de sa création et il le demeure encore aujourd'hui. Son directeur fondateur, Louis Sabourin, et son directeur actuel, Georges Hénault, reconnaissent tous deux, comme je vous encourage à le faire, que l'expression "Nord-Sud" est floue, voire même trompeuse, car elle suppose l'existence d'une relation qui tiendrait de l'ordre naturel des choses, apparentée à ciel et terre, mère et enfant, maître et serviteur. Pourtant, la réalité serait bien mieux représentée si l'on renversait les termes de cette expression pour dire plutôt "Sud-Nord".

Les nations du Sud abritent maintenant 3,9 milliards de personnes. Elles en compteront 4,9 milliards d'ici la fin du

siècle. Je voudrais inviter ceux et celles d'entre vous qui trouvent cette croissance affolante - et vous le devriez tous - à venir faire un tour au siège social du CRDI et à prendre un moment pour examiner l'horloge des ressources installée dans le hall d'entrée de l'édifice. Cette horloge à deux cadrans, programmés par ordinateur, compte sans interruption et nous présente une partie du défi planétaire qui nous attend : un des cadrans affiche la taille croissante de la population mondiale, en tenant compte des naissances et des décès, et l'autre affiche la superficie de terre arable qui reste sur la planète, c'est-à-dire la surface capable d'assurer, avec nos connaissances agricoles actuelles, une production durable de récoltes alimentaires, en tenant compte de la désertification, de l'urbanisation, de la dégradation des sols, et du reste.

Le chiffre du premier cadran augmente sans cesse, et celui du second décroît sans cesse. Au cours des deux heures que nous aurons passées dans cet auditorium, ce matin, la population de la planète augmentera d'environ dix-neuf mille habitants et la superficie de nos terres arables rétrécira de plus de cinq cents hectares.

When you are in the IDRC building, take a few extra moments to visit our library, view a film or two in our theatre, acquaint yourself with the meaning of absolute poverty, and how

it affects many more than a billion of our fellow human beings. The World Bank's definition of absolute poverty is not pleasant, but we must all understand it: "malnourishment to the point of being unable to work." It is a condition of life so characterized by malnutrition, illiteracy and disease as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency.

Canadians, understandably, have difficulty relating to that kind of condition. The definition will help you understand why people in these circumstances seek desperately to improve their condition, even if it means destroying rain forests, crowding into the already congested urban slums, engaging in degrading and underpaid activities - all simply in order to survive. Thus is the environment polluted and diminished, thus does social instability grow and political turbulence rise, thus does infectious disease increase and spread, thus do economic buoyancy and human dignity remain distant - almost cruel - concepts.

And thus does the South affect the North, not ephemerally by momentarily engaging our emotional responses but in sharp-edged, quantifiable, and evermore threatening fashion. In a single biosphere, environmental degradation anywhere is felt elsewhere; in an age of intercontinental ballistic missiles, political turbulence and local wars threaten always to engage us

all; in a period of rapid mass transport, people, bacteria and viruses do not respect national frontiers; in this era of a global economy, no nation wherever located is able to sustain a decent standard of living for its people if a majority of the inhabitants of the planet are desperately poor.

Adam Smith made this last point 2 centuries ago. Pope Paul VI summed it all up in 1967 when he stated in simple but eloquent terms that "The new name for peace is development." Yet how slow we are to respond effectively. Even when it affects our pocket books. The current economic downturn in Latin America - the southern half of our hemisphere - has in 6 years reduced in absolute terms the per capita incomes of the people living there, has meant the loss of many hundreds of thousands of jobs in the United States alone because of the collapse of former flourishing economies which imported U.S. products, and has contributed to major incidents of political turbulence even while it threatens further instability. What has been the response of the North? Foreign aid, of course, often in generous quantities. Yet when all is taken into account - aid, trade, investment, debt payments, etc. - the net transfer of financial resources is not from North to South, as you might expect, but the reverse. And not in insignificant volumes. In the year 1985, the net flow from the impoverished countries in the South to the industrialized countries of the North was 31 billion U.S.

dollars. From Latin America alone, from the Southern half of our hemisphere, the net outward financial resource transfer since 1982 has been 150 billion U.S. dollars.

Is that equitable? Is it just? Is it sustainable? "No", in every case. Does that contribute to bitterness, to disequilibria? Without question, "yes".

One need not be a global strategist, a macro-economist, an epidemiologist, or a climatologist to understand all this. One needs only to be human.

Et après être allés au CRDI, allez visiter le magnifique édifice de Madame Thomson, le Musée des Beaux Arts du Canada. Faites-en le tour lentement, en prenant le temps de savourer toute la richesse des réalisations culturelles qui y sont exposées. Voyez à quel point vous êtes redevables aux artistes de talent qui ont créé ces chefs-d'oeuvre, et pensez un peu à ce que chacun d'entre nous aurait perdu si ces personnes n'avaient pas vécu, si elles n'avaient pas eu l'occasion de transposer sur la toile leur vision du monde qui les entoure et le triomphe de l'esprit humain. Puis interrompez votre visite un moment et songez à ce que vous perdez, parce que 4 milliards de personnes du Sud sont privées d'une occasion semblable. Personne ne doute qu'il existe parmi ces centaines de millions de



personnes des gens doués d'un talent extraordinaire, capables de peindre de grands chefs-d'oeuvre, de composer des symphonies magnifiques, d'écrire de superbes romans. Nul doute non plus qu'il existe dans le Sud des gens qui, s'ils en avaient la chance, apporteraient une contribution tout aussi éclatante à la recherche scientifique et médicale, contribution qui serait à notre avantage à tous. Quelle tragédie et quelle perte immense pour nous tous! Combien inutile cet appauvrissement de l'humanité tout entière.

Et en sortant du Musée, peut-être même en sortant d'ici ce matin, demandez-vous si un seul autre moment de l'histoire du monde ait existé, ayant offert des défis de cette taille, de telles possibilités de réalisations au bénéfice de l'humanité. Je doute qu'il y en ait jamais eu. Si vous aviez le choix de vivre en une autre époque, dans une période moins exaltante et offrant moins de défis, y a-t-il qui que ce soit parmi vous qui en choisirait une autre? Je sais bien que non.

Mr. Chancellor, scientists describe the moment of turbulence and instability that often precedes momentous chemical or physical change as "the transition state." At that instant, the introduction of the correct catalyst, the application of the correct temperature or force, is the critical factor that produces the desired change. I should like to conclude this

morning by taking the liberty of making a suggestion to each one of my fellow members of this graduating class, a suggestion in which I am confident Dr. Thomson will join me. It is to ask you to regard this turbulent and unstable moment in the history of the human condition as "the transition state", and to pledge to utilize your talents, your skills, and your newly gained knowledge in catalytic fashion. The efforts of each one of you are important. Together, you and your classmates worldwide can make a difference. Together, you can produce a preferred future. Worldwide, we shall all be beneficiaries.

To that end, I offer my best wishes to each one of you.

Thank you. Merci.

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